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PROBABLE SOVIET POSITION AT A  
CONFERENCE ON ANTARCTICA

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE IN FULL

Submitted by the  
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, The Joint Staff, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Department of Defense.*

Concurred in by the  
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

*on 30 June 1959. Concurring were The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Intelligence, Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff; the Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB; the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Special Operations; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of his jurisdiction.*

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## PROBABLE SOVIET POSITION AT A CONFERENCE ON ANTARCTICA

### THE PROBLEM

To estimate Soviet objectives and the Soviet position on certain issues at a conference on Antarctica.

### ASSUMPTIONS

1. A conference of states having an interest in Antarctica (Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, Norway, South Africa, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States) will be held in the near future for the purpose of negotiating a treaty for Antarctica.

2. Participation in the conference will be limited to the foregoing 12 states.

3. The Soviet Union will participate in the conference.

4. The US position at the conference will be developed in accordance with the following basic policy objectives for Antarctica.

Orderly progress toward a peaceful solution of the problem of Antarctica which would:

a. Prevent the use of Antarctica for military purposes;

b. Provide for freedom of scientific investigation throughout Antarctica by citizens, organizations, and governments of all countries under established uniform rules;

c. Guarantee freedom of access to Antarctica by citizens of all countries under established uniform rules;

d. Establish uniform and nonpreferential rules applicable to all countries and their nationals for any possible development of economic resources in the future;

e. In general, provide for an orderly, joint administration of Antarctica by countries directly concerned, on a non-preferential basis for all countries, and for peaceful purposes only;

f. Provide such relationship or association with the UN as would advance the preceding objectives.

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## CONCLUSIONS

5. We believe that the chief present Soviet interest in Antarctica is the conduct of an extensive program of scientific research as part of their expanding study of the earth as a whole. They would gain basic scientific knowledge, including knowledge of military value, and also would gain prestige from scientific achievement. This interest leads the Soviets to regard as their main objective in Antarctica the preservation of freedom of action to conduct scientific research throughout the area. Other objectives may emerge as the now obscure potentialities of the continent are clarified. (*Paras. 9-15*)

6. We believe that the USSR will agree to a treaty providing for prevention of the use of Antarctica for military purposes, and for freedom of access and of scientific investigation for all. We believe that the Soviet desire for a treaty which will formalize their right to carry out activities in the area will bring them to accept the US proposal for a provision permitting the use of military personnel and resources for peaceful purposes. (*Paras. 16-18*)

7. We believe that the USSR will concur in a unilateral right of inspection by observers of all parties to the treaty, in order to ensure that the Antarctic is not used for military purposes. It has already indicated its agreement in principle to such a provision. The Soviets would probably not favor the establishment of a formal international organization to carry out the inspection aspects of treaty enforcement. If the Soviets did agree to such an organization, they would seek to restrict severely its scope and functions and insist on a veto right in its votes on substantive decisions. In general, moreover, the Soviets will wish to hold to a minimum international machinery to administer the provisions of the proposed treaty. (*Paras. 21-22, 27*)

8. The Soviet Union will continue to refuse to recognize claims of territorial sovereignty in the Antarctic. We believe that the Soviets will accept the proposed provision that the

treaty would involve neither renunciation nor recognition of any existing claims, and would place a freeze on future claims for the duration of the treaty. It is probable that the Soviets will insist on some form of accession which would admit, at a minimum, countries such as Poland, which are not included initially in the treaty conference, but which have an ostensible claim for participation. (*Paras. 25-26, 28*)

## I. SOVIET INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES IN ANTARCTICA

9. We believe that the chief Soviet interest in Antarctica is the conduct of an extensive program of scientific research from which not only to gain basic scientific knowledge, including knowledge of military value, but also to gain prestige from scientific achievement. This interest leads the Soviets to regard as their main objective in Antarctica the preservation of freedom of action to conduct scientific research throughout the area. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the full potentialities of the Antarctic Continent remain obscure and that Soviet objectives in the area may change in the future.

10. The Russians have a long tradition of research in the earth sciences and in cold weather problems. Their programs include study of the earth as a whole, requiring observations over as wide an area as possible and for protracted periods. Their antarctic activities appear to be an extension, albeit a large one, of previous fields of activity, and supplement their arctic research. Operational responsibility for both arctic and antarctic research has recently been merged in the USSR into a single research institute. We believe the Soviet scientific research of recent years will be continued. This program includes meteorology and weather forecasting (and possibly control); studies of the ionosphere, the upper air, cosmic rays, gravity, geomagnetism, earth currents and seismology, biology, geology and mineral exploration, mapping and hydrographic charting, and

navigation and oceanographic studies. The Soviets have monitored their satellites from the area, but reports that they contemplated launching satellites from both polar areas have not been confirmed. The Antarctic presents certain advantages in connection with anticipated space experiments and developments, e.g., the Van Allen radiation belt appears thinnest over the polar areas, and the frequent presence of high altitude electromagnetic phenomena might tend to mask high altitude nuclear tests. In general, however, the evidence available, including analysis of Soviet activities in the past year, does not suggest new fields of interest. While many fields of investigation provide information of military significance, they are also of legitimate nonmilitary importance.

11. We believe that the desire to preserve unimpeded access to the Antarctic as well as the prestige value of being recognized as a leader in Antarctic research will impel the Soviets to seek full participation in any political discussions relating to the area. They will almost certainly make an appearance of championing peaceful uses of the area and free access to all, both in order to safeguard their rights to unhampered activity and to gain propaganda dividends from this stand. Furthermore a treaty legitimizing the Soviet presence in the Antarctic would presumably preclude any Western Hemisphere signatory from charging that such presence constituted a threat to security under the Rio Treaty.

12. We have no evidence that the Soviet Union now regards the area as significant for overt military activities. The Soviets, in preliminary discussions, have favored treaty prohibition of military forces and activities, probably in order to demonstrate a pose of Soviet peacefulness as well as to eliminate the possibility of Western use of military force in the area. In regard to possible future military potentialities, they evidently consider that the logistical difficulties which they would face in exploiting any military potential would be so much greater than those of nearer Free World countries that they favor the prohibition of military activities.

13. The political interests of the USSR would be served by any arrangement which legitimized past and future Soviet activities in the various areas claimed by other countries. The Soviets have even said they would consent to regard present and future scientific activities as not contributing to possible future claims of sovereignty. The Soviets probably consider that accepting such a provision in the treaty would not prejudice their position should the treaty later become inoperative. They could then make claims on the basis of 19th century Russian explorations and their activities of recent years, and even during the treaty period. But for the foreseeable future, and especially if an international agreement freezing claims but granting access should be reached, the Soviets probably do not see an advantage in making territorial claims.

14. Aside from whaling operations in Antarctic waters, the scale of which the Soviets are increasing, they have no known economic interests in the area. They probably believe that their right to participate in the exploitation of such mineral or other economic resources as the future may reveal would best be protected by assurances of free access to the whole of the Antarctic.

15. The Soviets have shown their interest in having other Communist countries participate in Antarctic activities; Bloc scientists have been stationed at Soviet bases. In late 1958, the Soviets officially turned over one of their bases to Poland. The Soviets will probably seek to obtain international acceptance of Poland as a full participant in Antarctic matters and to have the area generally open to activities of Bloc countries.

## II. GENERAL SOVIET ATTITUDES AT A TREATY CONFERENCE

16. In the light of the foregoing summary of Soviet interests and objectives, we believe that the USSR will agree to a treaty providing for prevention of the use of Antarctica for military purposes, and for freedom of access and of scientific investigations for all. We believe that the Soviets, as indeed they have indi-

cated, would accept all the objectives stated in paragraph 4 of the Assumptions for this Estimate.

17. In recent discussions with the US, the Soviets have indicated they were ready to put aside what would appear to be strong propaganda and negotiating positions if this would lead to early conclusion of a treaty. If in their judgment the prospects for a treaty diminish, or if provisions were proposed which threatened serious restrictions on their activities, the Soviets would probably resort to propaganda pressures in negotiation, and if necessary refuse to sign the treaty. Most unresolved issues concerning treaty provisions now principally involve differences among the Western participants, so that the Soviets probably believe they will find opportunities to support other powers who would bear the brunt of arguing for those points favored by the Soviets.

18. As a general principle, the Soviets will probably favor a minimum of provisions beyond those ensuring freedom of access, prevention of the use of Antarctica for military purposes, and the stimulation of scientific research. They will favor a minimum of regulatory functions and administrative organization in any international "regime" of the signatories, and will probably prefer to leave all scientific planning, coordination and arrangements for the exchange of information and persons to the Special Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), the international scientific organization which has handled these matters since the end of the IGY.

19. It is likely that the Soviets will propose broadening the treaty conference to include Poland and perhaps other powers. However, they will probably not insist upon admission and will save their strongest stand for the question of subsequent accession to the treaty. The main objective of this move would be not only to increase Bloc participation in treaty matters, but also to secure the participation of countries not now having a stake in Antarctica and which would be likely to support Soviet positions.

### III. SOVIET POSITIONS ON KEY PROVISIONS OF A TREATY

20. *Peaceful Purposes.* The Soviets will almost certainly continue to support the general objectives of permitting all to engage in scientific activities and other peaceful pursuits everywhere in the Antarctic, and the prevention of the use of Antarctica for military purposes.

21. *Nonmilitarization and Neutralization.* The Soviets have indicated their agreement to the principle of nonmilitarization, and have moreover proposed an elaboration expressly prohibiting weapons testing, military maneuvers, and establishment of military fortifications. Until recently they have sought to extend this position to the prohibition of use of military personnel and equipment for peaceful purposes (staff, logistical support, communications). In view of the fact that the US scientific effort in the Antarctic, as well as that of some other Western countries, has been dependent upon such use of military men and equipment, and the Soviet one has not, the Soviets may seek to press their pose of peacefulness by refusing to agree to a provision of the treaty expressly allowing such peaceful uses of military assets. The Soviets have, however, recently indicated officially (though not publicly) that they will not object to such a provision. While the Soviets may initially propose, for propaganda purposes, the barring of the use of military resources, we believe that the Soviet desire for a treaty which will assure freedom of access and activity in the area will in the end bring them to accept a provision permitting the use of such resources.

22. *Inspection and Controls.* The Soviets have agreed in principle to the use of observers to ensure that the provisions prohibiting military activities are being respected. In diplomatic discussions they have said that they prefer the US proposal for a unilateral right of inspection by all parties, rather than the UK proposal for dispatch of observers by an international inspection organization. Inspection and observation would, in the Soviet view, be authorized only to ensure that no

prohibited military activities were being engaged in.

23. *Freedom of Scientific Access.* The Soviets will probably hold to their expressed agreement to a provision guaranteeing freedom of scientific research at any place in Antarctica for the citizens and organizations of all countries. If any other conference participants should seek to limit this freedom the Soviets will strongly oppose any explicit or implicit limitations, so as not to constrain their own freedom of action.

24. *Economic Exploitation.* The Soviets would probably press for unhampered access for economic purposes, and would not agree to discriminatory limitations on such activities. This problem does not appear likely to arise.

25. *Claims.* The Soviet Union will refuse to recognize claims of territorial sovereignty in the Antarctic. Until recently, Soviet negotiators have strongly opposed any reference to claims in the proposed treaty. They now have expressed agreement to a provision explicitly declaring that the treaty would involve neither renunciation nor recognition of any existing claims, and placing a freeze on future claims for the duration of the treaty. We believe that the Soviets will continue to hold this new position, and that if pressed by other participants toward some degree of recognition of claims they would refuse.

26. *Zone of Application.* The Soviets have, after long opposition, agreed to the generally accepted proposal to define the zone of application of the treaty as the area south of 60° south latitude. The Soviets have not committed themselves on the question of inclusion of the high seas lying within that area, a point of dispute among other participants. On the basis of their whaling interests, we believe the Soviets would agree to exclusion of the high seas.

27. *International Administration.* The Soviets will almost certainly favor holding to a minimum international machinery to administer the provisions of the proposed treaty. In particular, they would oppose the creation of an international regime of the 12 proposed signatories if substantive decisions could be made on other than a unanimous basis. In view of the strong opposition of some Western countries to any such organization, it is highly unlikely that any real international authority would be established by the conference. If an international organization were proposed to conduct observation and inspection of the fulfillment of provisions on nonmilitarization, the Soviets would insist upon a body with clearly defined and limited competence, and upon unanimous vote in any substantive or interpretive decisions. The Soviets probably would not oppose loose affiliation of any treaty organization with appropriate specialized agencies of the UN. The Soviets oppose any provision requiring submission of all disputes to the International Court of Justice.

28. *Accessions.* The Soviet position has been that all countries should be permitted to adhere to the treaty, since it offers free access for peaceful purposes to all. Other interested countries are divided on this issue, with several claimant countries strongly opposed to accessions of other than the 12 countries now preparing for the treaty conference. The Soviets have recently indicated that there might be some readiness on their part to compromise, perhaps by providing for a form of association short of that of the original signatories, or by providing accessions limited to members of the UN and its specialized agencies having a specific interest in Antarctica. It is probable that the Soviets will insist on some accession clause which would admit, at a minimum, countries such as Poland having a plausible claim for participation.

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